

April 30, 2007
Budget Work Session

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD APRIL 30, 2007

A Budget Work Session meeting of the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, was held Tuesday, April 30, 2007, at 5:30 PM in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 300 North Main Street, Hopewell, Virginia.

PRESENT: Steven R. Taylor, Mayor
Brenda S. Pelham, Vice Mayor
Christina J. Luman-Bailey, Councilor
Curtis W. Harris, Councilor
Kenneth B. Emerson, Councilor
E. Randy Sealey, Councilor
N. Gregory Cuffey, Councilor

John M. Altman, Jr., Interim City Manager
Ann M. Romano, City Clerk

Mayor Taylor opened the meeting at 5:30 PM. Roll call was taken as follows:

Mayor Taylor	-	present
Vice Mayor Pelham	-	present
Councilor Bailey	-	present
Councilor Harris	-	present
Councilor Emerson	-	present
Councilor Sealey	-	present
Councilor Cuffey	-	present

BUDGET WORK SESSION - CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Mr. Altman reported that the Commonwealth's Attorney, Anthony Sylvester, and Kay Rackley, Clerk of the Circuit Court, were unable to attend the Budget Work Session held on April 24, 2007, and would address Council at this Budget Work Session.

Clerk of the Circuit Court – Kay Rackley

Ms. Rackley provided a handout to Council (filed in the City Clerk's Office). She reported that there are 50 slides left in the plat cabinet; it is almost full. The Office of the Circuit Court Clerk brings revenue into the City. Plats come along with the deeds and must be filed. They have received bids for a new plat cabinet. One was for \$7,300 for a cabinet like the one they have now without the heavy doors; with 1200 envelopes. Ms. Rackley explained that they will need the plat cabinet due to increased building and more plats from Cameron Landing, the WaWa area, etc. The Hopewell Office of the Circuit Court Clerk does not yet file plats electronically. Other localities, Chesterfield for example, use a different system, but it is not through the state.

Elesteen Hager, Finance Director, explained to Council that there was no explanation in the budget for the plat cabinet request. That is why it was not included in the budget. This does not qualify under technology. Mr. Altman added that whenever anyone asks for a new item and there is no explanation, it is usually deleted.

During the last five to seven years, the number of plats received in Ms. Rackley's office has increased. Although the Department of Development scans all Mylar copies of plats, if a plat is larger than 11 x 14 it must be stored in the plat cabinet.

By consensus of Council \$7,300 was added to her budget.

Commonwealth's Attorney – Anthony N. Sylvester

Mr. Sylvester distributed a handout to Council (filed in the City Clerk's Office). He thanked Council for what they have given the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office in the past. He thanked them for the improvements to the physical offices. He expressed his appreciation for Council's assistance in getting all of his staff behind closed doors.

The Commonwealth's Attorney presented a "wish list." There are three new members on City Council since the last budget season. He understands that there are pressures in the school system and elsewhere.

The salary of the Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in his office is much lower than that of those in the surrounding area. There are 19 positions in the Hopewell Police Department that are higher than that position. The salary of the Criminal Analyst position in the Police Department is \$5,000 more than the Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney. The Victim Witness Director makes more than the ACA. The Juvenile Prosecutor's position is vacant. There is a gap between \$23,979-\$41,801. It was not filled because of economic stress in Hopewell. There is a stewardship responsibility to the City.

He is running his office on vacancy savings. The optimal goal is to reimburse the City through vacancy savings. He would like to be able to provide a pay scale that would ensure an increase after a certain length of service, etc.; reward loyalty and service. The salaries of his office should also be competitive with the City's.

The Commonwealth's Attorney's Office receives state and federal funds as well as local funds. The State Compensation Board apparently does not provide enough to make ends meet. Councilor Harris asked if the City could sue the Comp Board if the CA Office does not have enough people to run the office. Mr. Sylvester indicated that suing anyone is possible but the chances of being successful are slim. He does not have the flexibility to move funding in personnel.

Mr. Hager stated that the \$22,000 being requested to make up that salary is not in the budget.

Mr. Sylvester would like to implement a career development plan for the Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney. He wants the ability to hold on to employees. The most important thing is to develop a plan. He wants to plan out expenses on his behalf as well as the City's. The elimination of the Juvenile Prosecutor's position resulted from Governor Warner's 2004 6% mandatory cut. The Commonwealth's Attorney's office is dealing with the same, or more, crime than when he took over the job. How do you juxtapose those two realities? He would be able to fill the Juvenile Prosecutor's position if Council funded the difference. He can pay the Paralegal with what the Comp Board gives him. The position just happens to be vacant at the present time; it will be filled.

Mr. Altman acknowledged that the Commonwealth's Attorney made a choice. Using all of the Comp Board allocation for the vacant position, \$23,979, as opposed to using city money. If he fills the Juvenile Prosecutor position, then he would use city money. Mr. Sylvester indicated that vacancy savings do not roll over. Right now there are about \$21,000. In January or February the Comp Board will come back and the General Assembly will allow one-time equipment purchases.

There was discussion about BRAC and the importance of the Juvenile Prosecutor position. If you do not use the funds for that year, you lose them. But you could put it in for future years. After the new City Manager comes on board, perhaps this should be discussed with the Vice Mayor in Mr. Sylvester's

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office. In Winchester, the Juvenile Prosecutor is located in the Commonwealth's Attorney's office. It merits discussion. It would be appropriate to look at it.

Mr. Sylvester addressed a Richmond Times-Dispatch article dated April 30, 2007 discussing the Hopewell Commonwealth's Attorney. There will be a public meeting at the Courthouse; in General District Court, on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 7:00 PM and all are invited.

Hooray for Hopewell – Mary Forbes 2007 Board

Mary Forbes requested an additional \$5,000 be added to the budget. That is the first increase requested since 2001.

Insurance	\$2,187.00
Hopewell Police Department – 2 officers	\$ 843.99
12:00 AM – 6:00 AM Friday & Saturday	
Bill Board – six ads	\$1,752.00
Phone – Jan/Dec	\$1,011.05
Trash Fee – Allied Waste pays volunteers Port-a- Johns, etc.	<u>\$1,608.10</u>
Other expenses: electricity, lumber, postage, stationary, applications, etc.	
TOTAL	\$9,252.14

For civic organizations, Hooray for Hopewell is the largest fund raiser for the year. It was voted the Best Festival in the Tri-City area. Ms. Forbes thanked Council for past support.

RECESS

At 7:15 PM Mayor Taylor called for a brief recess.

MEETING RESUMED AT 7:25 PM

Resource Conservation And Development (RC&D) Council Of The South Centre Corridors – Robyn Thompson

The RC&D requested \$3,000.

Employee Salary Increases

Mr. Hager reported that City employees receive their raises in July. The state gives their raises in December. That will affect the Constitutional Officers' employees. The proposed 5% salary increase for employees includes the step increase. It has been 8 or 10 years since employee raises have been frozen. Because of health insurance increases, sometimes the employees did not see the raise.

Mayor Taylor polled Council about the amount of salary increase for City employees.

<u>4% Employee Pay Raise</u>	<u>5% Employee Pay Raise</u>
Councilor Sealey indicated that some adjustments were made and some promises were made. He was in favor of the 4% increase for City employees.	Councilor Bailey stated that the school employees will get a 5% increase.
Councilor Cuffey supported a 4% raise.	Councilor Harris favors the recommendation of Mr. Altman and Mr. Hager, 5%, who have worked on

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	this budget.
Councilor Emerson supported a 4% raise.	Vice Mayor Pelham reconsidered for that reason. Council has done a lot to City employees. Council is giving teachers a 5% raise. The budget has a 5.3% pay raise for City employees. She asked Council to reconsider the 5% raise and make employees feel worthy. Everybody in the City should get the same amount of raise.
Mayor Taylor supported a 4% raise.	

DISCUSSION: Councilor Harris commented on cutting the salary increase down to 4%. The City Manager's budget includes a 5% increase. How was 5% arrived at? Mr. Hager explained that the Step increase was 2.28%. The Labor Index in lieu of COLA lowered it to 2.5%. That was 5.28% The City Manager brought it to 4.78%. About 30% of the City workforce will only see a 3% increase. Councilor Harris indicated that the new City Manager, Mr. Daley, made a suggestion that Council look at providing 4% rather than 5%. Apparently, Mr. Daley referred to the statewide trend towards 4% pay raises. He would rather rely on their work than to consider the opinion of the new City Manager who has not worked on this at all.

Councilor Emerson asked how many empty positions remained in the Commonwealth's Attorney's office. Mr. Hager responded that we have no control over the Constitutional Offices. We can get the numbers for him only on City positions. The Police Department has three or four; the Fire Department one; Department of Development two; and Public Works one or two. Councilor Emerson requested a list of vacancies and the length of time they have been vacant.

Mr. Altman explained that there is a vacancy credit that comes back to the City every year. Six weeks of salary comes back because each vacancy must be held open for a minimum of six weeks once it is vacated for any reason. The City Manager must authorize the use of those funds. Social Security positions are state mandated. They have more positions authorized than they have money to pay for. They are on the state pay plan, not the City's. Their situation is very similar to that of Constitutional Officers. Two years ago the City gave Social Services \$50,000 to become salary competitive; it is recurring. Council has authorized a certain number of positions in the City. Council may have to eliminate some positions; the dollars just are not there. There has never been a Time and Motion Audit done on the City.

Councilor Cuffey supported a 4% raise.

Councilor Emerson supported a 4% raise.

Councilor Bailey requested additional information on whether to go from 5% to 4% pay raises. (Mr. Altman reported that Mr. Daley received Hopewell's budget last Friday morning.)

Vice Mayor Pelham reconsidered for that reason. Council has done a lot to City employees. Council is giving teachers a 5% raise. The budget has a 5.3% pay raise for City employees. She asked Council to reconsider the 5% raise and make employees feel worthy. Everybody in the City should get the same amount of raise. She supports 5%.

Mayor Taylor indicated that the argument for the school budget is to keep employees. Mr. Altman stated that in the Palmer & Cay salary study, Council only funded the employees at the 50th percentile. We are not competitive with the surrounding area. Mayor Taylor suggested leaving that item out as an option for right now.

The majority of Council agreed to provide City employee salary increases at 4%.

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Computers - \$100,000

The proposal was to cut the Computer Replacement Budget by half to \$50,000, and to look in next year's budget to make some improvements. Mr. Altman explained that the \$100,000 comes from the Capital Fund. This is the fourth year that the City has invested \$100,000 in computers. Eight to 10 years ago the City invested \$2M in computers; they want to keep the network up and current. Mr. Hager indicated that we have a schedule for the next 3-4 years. This includes desk tops, the software and hardware, etc.

Mayor Taylor polled Council on the computer issue:

Councilor Bailey feels that if it comes down to pay raises for employees and reducing computers, she supports cutting computers and leaving it in raises for employees. Councilor Cuffey agreed. Councilor Sealey agreed to cut the computers.

Councilor Emerson had not heard enough to make a decision.

Councilor Harris agreed to take from the computers to provide pay raises for employees.

Vice Mayor Pelham referred to the Hooray for Hopewell request, and comment that volunteers were donating their own money to make ends meet. She opposed cutting the computers at this time.

Councilor Bailey agreed to cut the computer budget by half to \$50,000.

Councilor Cuffey asked for the deadline for the budget adoption. Mr. Hager responded that the School Budget deadline is May 15, and the City budget deadline is July 1.

When polled again, Councilor Emerson voted to cut the computer budget by half to \$50,000.

The majority of Council agreed to cut the computer budget by half to \$50,000.

Fire Station #2 - \$500,000

Mayor Taylor suggested that this issue be postponed for one or two years. He polled Council:

<u>Postpone \$500,000 request</u>	<u>Grant \$500,000 request now</u>
Councilor Bailey indicated that it is not a safety issue yet. She would rather cut here than elsewhere. She supported the Mayor's suggestion to postpone this.	*Councilor Harris felt that the Fire Station is critical. We have not had any real problems yet. It should be addressed as quickly as possible. He supports granting the Fire request for \$500,000 for Fire Station #2.
Vice Mayor Pelham supports the postponement of this item for one or two years.	
Councilor Emerson supports deleting this item from the budget now. But he is not sure that Route #36 is the place to locate Fire Station #2.	
Councilor Sealey supports deleting this item from the budget.	
Councilor Cuffey supports postponing this item for this year.	

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Mayor Taylor stated that the Emergency Operations Command Center is located at Fire Station #1. Perhaps consideration should be given to relocating the Mobile Command Unit to Fire Station #2. Should there be a chemical emergency issue in the City, Fire Station #1, with the EOC, would be in the middle of the hazardous area. Moving the Mobile Command Unit to Fire Station #2 would provide an EOC away from the hazardous zone.

Councilor Harris said that there was some indication that there were some City issues with a new Fire Station. ***He would be willing to wait another year.** Mayor Taylor assured him that administration can do a lot in the coming year regarding site planning, looking at land, property acquisition, etc. Also, some direction should be given to the Fire Department. It will be funded from the Capitol Fund. \$500,000 from Surplus Non-Recurring Revenues. Mayor Taylor suggested having a Work Session in August or September with the Fire Department.

Council consensus on this matter was not to grant the Fire Department's request for \$500,000 for Fire Station #1 at this time, and wait at least one year.

Police & Public Works Vehicles

Mayor Taylor suggested cutting \$400,000 and leaving \$157,000. Provide one Sheriff's vehicle and administration provide the rest. The Mayor polled Council:

Councilor Cuffey supported cutting \$400,000.

Councilor Sealey supported cutting \$400,000.

Councilor Emerson supported cutting \$400,000.

Vice Mayor Pelham supported cutting \$400,000.

Councilor Bailey asked the cost for eight police vehicles - \$262,000. She supported cutting \$262,000 from this budget item.

The majority of Council agreed to cut \$400,000 from the Police & Public Works Vehicles budgets.

Police Positions (5 Police Officers and 3 Canines)

Mayor Taylor polled Council to cut \$124,600 from this budget:

By Consensus, Council unanimously agreed to make the cut of \$124,600.

Clerk of Circuit Court – Additional \$7,300 for Plat Cabinet

Mayor Taylor polled Council to add \$7,300 to the budget of the Clerk of the Circuit Court for a Plat Cabinet:

By Consensus, Council unanimously agreed to add \$7,300 to that budget.

Commonwealth's Attorney – Additional \$20,000

Mr. Hager cautioned Council not to supplement salaries for the Commonwealth's Attorney. That opens the door for other requests. The Mayor thanked Mr. Hager for his comments.

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Mayor Taylor polled Council to add \$20,000 to the budget of the Commonwealth's Attorney:

\$20,000

Councilor Bailey
Councilor Harris
Mayor Taylor
Councilor Emerson
Councilor Cuffey

\$18,000

Vice Mayor Pelham
Councilor Sealey

By majority of Council, \$20,000 was added to the budget of the Commonwealth's Attorney.

Hooray for Hopewell

Mayor Taylor polled Council on whether to add \$5,000 or \$10,000 to the budget for Hooray for Hopewell:

\$5,000

Councilor Emerson
Councilor Sealey

\$10,000

Vice Mayor Pelham
Councilor Bailey
Councilor Harris
Councilor Cuffey
Mayor Taylor

By majority of Council, \$10,000 was added to the budget for Hooray for Hopewell.

Sheriff's Department

Mayor Taylor explained the public safety function of the Sheriff's Department, and their request for additional money. He polled Council on whether to grant the Sheriff the \$16,000 requested for Personnel. Councilor Cuffey asked Council to consider granting the full request for the salary supplement plus the part-time salary stipend, for a total of \$37,000. The poll resulted:

By Consensus, Council unanimously agreed to add \$37,000 to the Sheriff's budget.

City Council's Miscellaneous Budget

At the request of Vice Mayor Pelham, Mayor Taylor polled Council to add \$4,500 to City Council's Miscellaneous Budget to cover such miscellaneous expenses as the Boards and Commissions Annual Banquet, etc.

By Consensus, Council unanimously agreed to add \$4,500 to City Council's Miscellaneous budget.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councilor Harris inquired about improvements in various communities throughout the City. Curb and gutter is absent in old communities. We have only used CDBG money. That money is restricted. We should make some allocations to finish the projects. Several have never been completed. Mayor Taylor suggested that administration get with Councilor Harris to identify the neighborhood he is speaking about. Get a price for each job he is talking about (not just CDBG).

JOHN TYLER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mayor Taylor polled Council on a Capital request from JTCC for a one-time addition of \$10,000 to that budget:

The majority of Council voted to grant the one-time request of \$10,000 to JTCC.

DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATION

Councilor Bailey indicated that the Downtown Organization will fund the coordinator position. The resolution was passed and sent to the state. We have made the commitment. Mayor Taylor stated that it should be put back in under the Department of Development. If the City receives the designation, we can re direct it.

Mr. Altman indicated that the City should be hearing from the number one candidate for the position of Director of Development soon; and the Planner position also. Job descriptions have not been developed yet. The Neighborhood Planner would work with the different neighborhoods. If money were put in Development's budget, he would not have a problem with that. The money cannot be put in Neighborhood/Downtown and combined. These matters must be kept separate. If we are not designated, then the money is still there.

Councilor Bailey emphasized that Hopewell has told the state how much money was coming from the City and when. Mr. Hager suggested putting in contingency appropriations for \$50,000 for seed money. Then next year it would become part of recurring money.

We still need a Neighborhood Coordinator, and still need someone in the City to coordinate downtown growth. Mayor Taylor suggested revisiting this later. Have a Work Session to decide what to do with it. **Add a contingency in the Budget Resolution.**

Vice Mayor Pelham indicated that Council reduced the capital budget of the Department of Recreation and Parks from \$73,000 to \$12,000. The Mayor asked for an itemized list to Council.

Auto Mechanics from Schools to City

Mayor Taylor polled Council on the proposal to keep the School Bus Auto Mechanics under the School system this year and move them under Public Works next year. Next year one person will retire from the School system.

The majority of Council agreed to keep the School Bus Auto Mechanics under the School system this year and move them under Public Works next year.

*Mr. Altman indicated that a Memorandum of Understanding will have to be ratified outlining the City's rules and regulations governing the Auto Mechanics.

Cigarette Tax

The Cigarette Tax was removed from all consideration during this budget year.

Hopewell Circuit Court Judicial Clerkship

Mayor Taylor polled Council on whether to fully fund the Circuit Court's request for a Judicial Clerkship at \$55,000:

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By Consensus, Council unanimously agreed to fully fund the Circuit Court's request for a Judicial Clerkship at \$40,000 (\$35,000 plus benefits).

Beacon Theatre Summer Program

Mayor Taylor polled Council on whether to grant the Beacon Theatre \$2,500 for scholarships for a summer drama program for elementary and middle school students. Upon further discussion, it was determined that the Beacon Theatre, and Cheryl Collin its Executive Director, had not requested the money and do not want the money.

ADJOURN

At 8:26 PM, **motion** was made by Councilor Cuffey, and seconded by Councilor Harris, to adjourn the meeting. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Councilor Emerson	-	yes
Councilor Sealey	-	yes
Mayor Taylor	-	yes
Vice Mayor Pelham	-	yes
Councilor Cuffey	-	yes
Councilor Bailey	-	yes
Councilor Harris	-	yes

Steven R. Taylor, Mayor

Ann M. Romano, City Clerk